

432 U. S. Court House
Los Angeles CA 90012
December 4, 1969

Mr. Bob Coney
2627 Myrtle Street
Sioux City, Iowa 51113

Dear Mr. Coney:

I am an avid collector of certain tokens, particularly jail and prison tokens, also circus and carnival tokens. At the present time I am engaged in compiling a checklist and catalog of jail and prison tokens of the United States with the view of publishing it as an addendum to Burns "Media of Exchange Used in Prisons" which was published in 1930.

It has come to my attention that there is in existence a jail token from the Sioux City Jail and stamped on it "Good for One Meal." I believe it is aluminum and about 18 or 20 mm in size.

It is also my understanding that you have a coin business and are a collector of Sioux City tokens. It is with this thought in mind that I am writing to you to inquire, first, if you have such a token, secondly, if you can give me any information as to its background, i.e., who made it, how long it was in use, date of use, when discontinued, and anything that might be of interest in a book of this type. Of course, thirdly, should you know of some one that has such a token, or any others like it, I would be pleased to make an offer for it or pay any reasonable price asked for it.

Am enclosing herewith a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience in replying. Thanking you in advance for your courtesy in the matter, I am

Yours sincerely,

Agnar Wahlberg

432 U. S. Court House
Los Angeles CA 90012
December 15, 1969

✓ Dear Mr. Coney:

I am in receipt of your letter of December 8 and the rubbings of the Sioux City Jail "one meal" token. I appreciate very much your time and trouble in getting this information to me, and in return will fill you in with what I have learned about them.

To begin with, this is identical to one that I have a photograph of for my checklist, which was loaned to me by one of your Iowa token collectors. I feel confident that there should be several of these around and it may take a little digging to find them, because quite a lot of them were made.

It was first believed that these were first made around the turn of the century (1890-1900), but further research and checking has developed that they were used in the 30s during the depression and/or the dust bowl era. The original police station was built in 1893 and served the force until 1914. At that time there were only about a dozen on the force, including the Chief and everybody. So the tokens couldn't have been used then.

During the 30s during the depression, etc., many vagrants came through Sioux City and sort of depended upon the good offices of the police department to give them a bed and/or a meal and then send them on their way. And this is what happened and what these tokens were used for. This is the present thinking until something more concrete is found to show otherwise. Also the tokens are rather hastily made, uniface (one sided only), with no denominations on them as was the custom among the older prisons, evidently made locally and one would think in two steps, with the "one meal" stamped in later. For all these reasons this theory seems the most tenable.

You state the party that you sold it to is not interested in selling. Maybe he would be interested in a more valuable Sioux City token that he is collecting that I may be able to get for him. Would appreciate your letting him see this letter and if he is interested to get in touch with me. Am positive I can find something of interest for him.

Cordially,

GOOD FOR
ONE MEAL
FOOD
HAVE

✓ CHECKED
10/99